2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

The next day was got through by having a thorough 'wash' of my clothes, and cultivating a closer acquaintance with the Chilian Arias, from whom I obtained a dog in exchange for an old guanaco mantle. But as on the third day no signs of the return of Orkake appeared, the inaction became insupportable, so after the departure on a hunting excursion of Tankalow and his son, Arias and myself determined to start in pursuit of Casimiro and his party. As Arias had no horse, it would be necessary for us to ride and tie; but even thus we could make quick travelling. Accordingly at two P.M. we started, much to the astonishment of the Indios, who protested that we were certain to lose our way or be killed by the pumas. One old lady, Orkake's sister, after trying in vain to dissuade us, presented me with a slice of charqui, which with a few handfuls of coffee formed our stock of provisions. That day we did not get very far; but in the next march, as the track of the Indians was plain, we had made thirty miles by the time we halted, at nightfall, at a place where another valley from the northward joined that of the Rio Chico. Our charqui had barely sufficed for an evening meal, so this day we satisfied our appetites with the supply of the tuberous roots of a plant which grows in great quantities in most parts of Patagonia.

The plant, which in its growth resembles very closely the lobster bug of the Falkland Islands, and might be easily taken for it but for the absence of the gum, which perhaps was attributable to the quality of the soil or the season of the year, is easily recognizable by its mass of tiny green leaflets, and presents the appearance of a small hillock of earth covered with delicate moss. By digging down into the heap, one large and several small tuberous roots are found, which when roasted in the ashes prove sufficiently palatable to hungry men.

We went to sleep in the open air, rolled up in our guanaco mantles, but awoke to find that a heavy fall of snow had covered everything a foot deep, and totally hidden all trail of

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

useless. Tankelow, however, found an ostrich and nest, the eggs from which, about thirty in number, he, according to Indian custom, divided among those who came up before they were removed from the nest; among these lucky individuals was myself; for, seeing him make to the spot, and the male bird get up, and being moreover, well mounted and exceedingly hungry, I was among the first arrivals. Far away to the right of our track, extending thirty or forty miles eastward, lies a district called by the Indians 'The Devil's Country,' which, they assured me, is never entered, probably from the barren and impracticable nature of the surface, which seems, from description, to be even worse than the wilderness traversed by us. Beyond this district there is a practicable track, sometimes followed by the Indians, leading northward, probably used as a route to the Chupat; but from that line to the sea the country is so impassable that the Indians say it would require two years to proceed by the sea-coast from Santa Cruz to the Rio Negro. The existence of such tracks as these, and the desolate Travisias encountered near the coast, have probably caused Patagonia to be described as an arid, almost waterless country; but, in reality, after passing the coast barrier most of the interior abounds in lagoons, springs, and frequent streams; and, even in the Travisias, the numerous wild animals met with show that water exists.

Towards evening we left the snow behind us; and descending a lofty hill, which had bounded our view all day, came to a large swelling down, from which the prospect was far more encouraging. Rolling plains extended to the north and north-east, whilst the Cordillera rose like a wall on the western side. This hill is called by the Indians 'God's Hill;' and the tradition, as communicated by Casimiro, relates that from this spot the Great Spirit dispersed the animals which he had made in the caverns. But some of the animals must have remained behind, as, out on the lower slope of the downs, two pumas were chased and killed. An hour's ride

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

be seen a party of young men playing at ball, in another a man breaking a colt, and down by the side of the stream groups of girls bathing, or wandering in the swamps picking the wild spinach, which grew all along the margin of the water in great quantities. One day I went on an excursion with the children to pluck spinach and plunder the nests of wild ducks and upland geese, from which we returned laden with spoil, and in the evening a stew, *à la* Tehuelche, was made with ostrich grease, spinach, and eggs, which combination was universally approved of. Another day we went fishing, and after catching several with a hook and line, voted it slow work, so contrived a net by sewing two ponchos together, and waded into the stream dragged the shallow parts, and, notwithstanding the duck-weed, which rather impeded us, made several good hauls, the take consisting of the perch-like fish and a black species of cat-fish: the Indians, however, except Casimiro, would not eat the fish, and evidently regarded my enjoyment of them much as an Englishman would at first view their appreciation of blood. Another day we went on an expedition to dig up a species of root somewhat resembling a parsnip, but although we grubbed about for an hour our efforts were only scantily rewarded by a few small roots, which were given to the children. One roasted in the ashes, at Mrs. Orkeke's invitation I tasted, and found it rather tasteless and insipid.

During our stay in this pleasant resting-place the weather was bright and sunny, and on calm days warm, and the absence of rain almost made it appear like summer; but whenever the west wind blew, the piercing cold dispelled the passing illusion. The long delay which was necessary to recruit our horses, in anticipation of a campaign against the young guanaco and the wild cattle, was most acceptable to all the members of our party; and after the two preceding months of quarrels, real and suspected dangers, and forced marches, our present peaceable existence, though devoid of adventure, was thoroughly enjoyable. An occasional hunting

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

Christmas time of my life: to parody the 'Ancient Mariner,' it was 'Cattle, cattle everywhere, and never a bit of beef.' The following day was spent in the toldos, and some of the Indians were desirous, or pretended to be, of going once more in search of cattle. Orkeke would not hear of it, so on the 28th we marched, following the course of the river in a more or less north-east direction. The weather was beautiful, and after leaving the plain we rode along the winding valley, now and then starting a herd of guanaco or a solitary ostrich. Towards evening we encamped on the banks of the river, and the women, after pitching the toldos, employed themselves in grubbing up potatoes. This day we saw smoke to the north, caused by the hunting-parties of the other Indians, and also some at a greater distance, which Orkeke said was that of the Araucanian Indians, whom it was expected that we should shortly meet with.

On the 29th we were preparing to march, and while the women were engaged in lading the horses some of us were picking the berries of the 'Califata,' or barberry (Berberis buccifolia), or looking for strawberries, when a boy, from a party of other Indians occupying the toldos near at hand, rode up as if despatched as a chasqui, and stated that his party had communicated with the Araucanians, amongst whom there had been a row in a drinking bout, resulting in the death of the cacique. This story was fully believed, and Orkeke was rather perplexed, as perhaps the new cacique might not be friendly disposed towards the Tehuelches. Without hunting, we rode quietly down to the next encampment, where the two strange toldos had already arrived. On our near approach one of the Indians came to meet us, and whilst discussing a pipe, after the observance of the usual ceremonial prescribed by etiquette (as we had not seen the man before), we asked him about the row amongst the Araucanos, which turned out to be all a hoax on the part of the promising youth who had visited us. After a while we

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5
Araucanians SG4

After a good dinner we adjourned to see the races, a great match being on between the two tribes. The course was about four miles; and the race resulted in a victory for the Tehuelches. Both sides had backed their favourites heavily; and as on this occasion the ladies took a prominent share in the betting, the Tehuelches were in great glee, having won from the fair Araucanians many valuable mandils and lechus. In the evening a grand feast took place, with a mandil tent and dance.

Near this place grew a quantity of the wild potatoes, and the women used to start early in the morning and come back towards evening with their horses loaded. The tubers were the largest I had seen, and closely resembled the sweet potato in flavour. The usual way of cooking them was boiling in a pot, a sod of earth being placed over all to keep the steam in.

We made a stay of eight days in Engel-kaik, amusing ourselves by racing, visiting the Araucanos, and passing a very pleasant time, the only drawback being the illness of Crimé, who grew gradually worse.

The day before our departure, Jackechan and El Sourdo intimated that, as they feared a disturbance, and wished to keep clear of any fight, they would not accompany us to Las Manzanas, but purposed to proceed in the direction of Chupat, and send in a messenger to the Welsh colony. So I at once took the opportunity of forwarding a letter to Mr. Lewis Jones, requesting certain supplies of yerba, tobacco, and sugar.

On February 5th the whole camp broke up, Jackechan and two toldos marching to the north-east, and the remainder, who now formed an extensive train, marching almost due north. Before leaving, Jackechan sent one of his wives and his youngest son, who was remarkably attached to me, to our toldo, to be under the charge of her father, Kai Chileno. El Sourdo had pressed me to go with their small party, and for some time I wavered, but thought it best to stick to Casimiro, and pay a visit to Chocoepe, and the much-praised

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5
Araucanians 564

We remained some days in Diplaik, during which several races were run, resulting on this occasion in favour of the horses of the Araucanians, who won many horses and mares from their neighbours. A T 525

The international sports were diversified by a cock fight between Orkeke's bird, and one belonging to an Araucanian. My assistance was requested to sharpen the spurs, and my friends were much astonished at my indignant refusal to have anything to do with such a proceeding. The Araucanian owner of the cock had also a hen which, during the march, sat upon a clutch of eggs and successfully reared her brood of six chickens, the hen, nest, and all being carefully transported on horseback, and Dame Partlet seeming quite as much at home in the saddle as any Indian mother with her nurseling carried in the cradle behind her. A T 525 231

In the dry lagoons on the western side of the valley the women, and indeed sometimes the men, were frequently engaged in grubbing up an edible root which grew in large quantities. The leaf of the plant is very minute, and the root, which is found about a foot below the surface, varies in length from one to three inches: it is quite white, and about a quarter of an inch in diameter; when raw its taste resembles that of a chestnut, but is rather sweeter. The Indians boil it and drink the water, which is very sweet. During the last two days of our stay we subsisted entirely on this food and fish caught in the stream, as meat was not obtainable. Some of the Tehuelches were here induced for the first time to taste the fish on which Casimiro, Mofia, and myself were regaling, and some of them took a great liking to it, and borrowing my lines and hooks were soon sitting on the bank waiting patiently for a bite. They caught several, and towards evening returned with my lines and a share of the fish for us, which we did not require. As I had plenty of hooks, these ingenious savages soon made lines for themselves out of twisted ostrich sinews, and may, for all I know, at the present time be occupied in fishing. The fact that none of these A T 222 ● 137 A T [282] T 242 226 177 T [227]

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5
Araucanians SG4

Tehuelche friends. The gloriously warm weather, which, for a wonder, continued during our stay at Lilly-haik, as this station was named, rendered our residence there most enjoyable, and we revelled in the simple pleasures of the woods; sometimes three or four of us would go across the brook, and traversing a plain occupied by the horses and cattle, search for strawberries amongst the ravines of the neighbouring mountains, or climb the tall trees and gather the yellow insipid fungus adhering to the branches, or lie down amongst the wild violets and enjoy the *dolce far niente*. These Indian children of nature showed themselves as thoroughly able to appreciate the idleness of gathering fruit and flowers and roaming in the woods as school children on a holiday ramble. On one occasion Casimiro and several others proceeded in search of wood wherewith to construct saddles, and we felled several fine trees, selecting and cutting off suitable pieces of timber. It was hard work with blunt axes, but Indians are indefatigable when they once commence a task. After my spell at the axe I wandered off with a companion into the thicker forest in search of fungus to make tinder. Of this we found little, but thirst soon made us seek for water, and discover a delicious ice-cold rivulet, embowered with currant bushes bearing ripe fruit. Here we remained a short time smoking and picking currants, recumbent on the mossy turf, till a shout in the distance warned us that our companions were returning. On our way home we killed one of the flat toad-like lizards which the Indians regard as devilish; we also caught a young skunk, which Casimiro wished to keep as a pet for the children, but at my instance let it go and enjoy the delights of freedom. 'Fancy a tame skunk!' some may exclaim; but in Hinchel's toldo there were two skunks which, perfectly tame and as playful as kittens, ran about everywhere, never using their offensive powers, and sometimes getting lost for an hour or two caused a dreadful outcry to be raised by the children until they were found.

The hill slopes were a garden of calceolarias, alyssum, tiny